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SUBJECT: Lebanon: Media Reaction - March 31, 2009

Atmospherics:

All media outlets gave top billing to the Arab Summit in Doha. A number of outlets characterized the summit as a success, particularly since it ended with the Libyan-Saudi reconciliation. Other outlets observed that, except for the Libyan-Saudi reconciliation and the attendance of the Sudanese President, the summit "was only a repetition of other summits." One newspaper commented sarcastically that Arab summits have changed into "social gatherings" where real Arab causes are "lost."

Selected Headlines

"The Arab Summit Concluded and the Libyan Leader Stole the Limelight from Al-Bashir" Independent Ad-Diyar

"The Doha Declaration: Dialogue to Solve Arab differences and Rejection of Bashir's Arrest Warrant" pro-Hariri Al-Mustaqbal

"The Doha Summit: A Limited Timeframe for Israel to Achieve Peace" Centrist Al-Anwar

Block Quotes:

"The Ceiling of the Arab Summit is Managing Differences," an editorial by Rafiq Khoury in Centrist Al-Anwar (3/31):

"The Doha Summit was not...different from other Arab summits. ...Each summit carries a majestic slogan which is far away from the difficult reality...and during each summit there are surprises. This summit witnessed several surprises: the absence of the Egyptian President, ...the attendance of the Sudanese President,...and the Libyan-Saudi reconciliation. ...All of the above, however, should not be the core of the summit. Arabs are facing many challenges that are in need of a united strategic vision in order to confront the Zionist projects and other...regional projects that are based on Arab weaknesses. ...The most important development in this particular summit is moving from conflicts to the phase of acknowledging these conflicts and trying to do something about them. ...The road ahead is long, but today is better than yesterday and we hope that tomorrow will witness a new development of quality."

"Summits and Reconciliations," an unsigned editorial in independent Al-Diyar (3/31):

"Reconciliations have become the reason for holding Arab summits. Attendance of summits have become a factor by which we measure the success of these summits. The real causes, problems, and challenges of the Arab nation are getting lost in the middle of all this superficiality... Arab summits have merely become social gatherings..."

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